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Photo by Tarawa Public Affairs



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Tarawa Sailors and Marines set sail on WestPac deployment

By Tarawa Public Affairs
 Photos by PH3 (AW/SW)
 James Spiker

SAN DIEGO- The 'Eagle of the Sea' USS Tarawa LHA 1, is heading towards the Arabian Gulf in support of the Global War on Terrorism. The ship and it's complement of over 3,000 Sailors, Marines and civilians will depart its homeport of San Diego, Ca, the morning of July 16, for it's major

WestPac deployment. The USS Tarawa LHA 1, will be among an Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG-1), force of approximately 5,500 Sailors and Marines deployed on six ships and one submarine. Tarawa serves as the flagship for ESG-1.

"All of the training over the past year, all of the

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preparations, everything we've done up to this point will now be put to the test wherever we're ordered to go," said Tarawa Commanding Officer Capt. Peter D. Murphy. "We're going to make sure it pays off."

ESG-1 is comprised of the ships of Amphibious Squadron (PHIBRON) One, the amphibious assault ship USS Tarawa (LHA 1), the amphibious transport dock ship USS Cleveland (LPD 7) and the Landing dock ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52). Joining the ships in the strike group are the guided-missile cruiser USS Chosin (CG-65), homeported in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the guided-missile frigate USS Ingraham (FFG-61), based in Everett,



Petty Officer McFarland shares one last moment saying farewell to his loved one, prior to getting underway for WESTPAC 05.

Wash, and the fast attack (SSN-763). USS submarine USS Santa Fe Decatur (DDG-73)

played the role of the guided missile destroyer for the exercise. The Norfolk, Virginia-based guided-missile destroyer USS Gonzalez (DDG-66) is already forward deployed and will join up with ESG-1 later the summer as part of the Navy's Sea Swap initiative.

The three amphibious ships will carry a total of approximately 2,200 Marines from the Camp Pendleton-based 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable).

The primary mission of the Tarawa ARG is to land and sustain U.S. Marines on any shore during hostilities. Tarawa embarks the Marine Corps' AV-8B Harrier attack jets, CH-53E Super Stallion heavy lift helicopters, CH-46 Sea Knight

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CTM3 Celida Bruss says goodbye to her husband Johnathan Bruss just prior to the ship getting underway for deployment.

medium lift helicopters, AH-1W Cobra attack helicopters and UH-1N Huey multi-purpose helicopters. In addition, Tarawa embarks landing

craft air cushion (LCAC) surface assault boats and landing craft utility (LCU) boats.

During the most previous deployment in 2003,



Arionna Dewerff rests her head in sorrow on her father Marine Sargent Kim Dewerff's shoulder on July 16th. Dewerff is deploying with the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) on board the USS Tarawa (LHA-1).

Tarawa participated in 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' and 'Enduring Freedom'. While in the Arabian Gulf at that time, Tarawa supported the U.S.-led coalition operations in southern Iraq to overthrow the regime of Saddam Hussein.

Sailors and Marines aboard USS Tarawa "man the rails" as the ship departs San Diego Harbor.



Arabian Gulf Bound Sailors Visit Hawaii

HONOLULU- On its way to the Arabian Gulf in support of the Global War on Terrorism, the USS Tarawa LHA-1, arrived at the Hawaiian Islands, its first port of call of the deployment.

The general purpose amphibious assault ship, left its homeport in San Diego July 16, and arrived in Hawaii the 22nd, on it's first leg of a six-month deployment to the Western Pacific and Arabian Sea.

The hand salute is rendered by a Tarawa Sailor in honor of the fallen at the Arizona Memorial as the ship entered Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.



Photo by PHAN (AW/SW) Kelly Morgan



ISC James Williams , MACS Victor Machias, DKC Carolyn Mitchell, LNC Karlene Wright, FCC Frank Paule, ABCM Benjamin Rape and ISC Duke from Joint Intelligence Center Pacific all pitched in to restore the Mighty Mo.

Tarawa Chief's restore Mighty Mo CPO Mess

The USS Missouri BB-63 foundation wanting to restore the Chief Petty Officers Mess and turn it into the first CPO museum, found able volunteers aboard USS Tarawa LHA-1, to complete the groundwork required to get the museum

project started. ISC James Williams, contacted the foundation director and was told there was always work to be done, and they would find something for the Tarawa Chief's to do. "I love my role as a Chief Petty Officer and couldn't think of a better way to pay tribute to the Chiefs that helped me get here than by helping the MISSOURI foundation get this project started," said Williams. It was fun talking to the other Chiefs helping on the project about their experiences during initiation/transition, he added.

Helping hands in Batu-Batu & Sanga-Sanga Philippines

By LT. Ron Flanders

ESG Public Affairs

Photo's by Tarawa Staff Photographer

TAWITAWI, REPUBLIC OF THE PHILLIPINES—More than 150 Sailors and Marines from Expeditionary Strike Group One (ESG-1) teamed with medical personnel from the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and civilian relief organizations in a humanitarian assistance operation in the southern island of Tawi Tawi August 9-10. The two-day joint operation in the small towns of Batu Batu and Sanga Sanga demonstrated the Filipino



Navy Lt. Dawn Thatcher, dental officer, USS Pearl Harbor, extracts a tooth from one of the thousands of local villagers from Sanga-Sanga, Republic of the Philippines.

government's commitment to its people in this remote region, providing nearly 3,000 indigent residents with medical and dental care, and furnishing local

schools with new desks, tables and bookshelves. Just after midnight on the first day of the operation, Marines from the 13th MEU Service Support Group (MSSG-13) and Battalion Landing Team 2/1, medical personnel from Fleet Surgical Team Three, and doctors and dentists from USS Tarawa

(LHA-1), and USS Pearl Harbor (LSD-

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52) boarded landing craft utility (LCUs) from Assault Craft Unit One (ACU-1) with their AFP counterparts. Four hours later, the craft tied up to the pier at Naval Station Batu Batu, and after unloading food, water, and medical supplies, walked to the town, where they were met by more than 1,500 villagers already standing in line, eager to receive medical care.

In Batu Batu, ESG-1 and AFP doctors worked in tandem, treating more than 1,300 patients, including several hundred young children. They provided general medical screening, minor surgeries, and free medications and multi-vitamins. Patients with more



A Republic of the Philippines soldier and a non-governmental organization volunteer distribute schoolbooks to anxious hands at the Batu-Batu Elementary School.

serious medical conditions will receive follow-on care coordinated by the Filipino government and the Joint Special Operations Task Force-

Phillipines (JSOTF-P).

“There is only one doctor in Batu Batu right now, and she doesn’t have any supplies,” said 1st Lt. Jackie Carter, the site commander for the operation. “This is huge for these people. The basic care we are giving them is probably something they haven’t had in years, if at all.”

The urgency of the situation immediately became apparent to the medical teams, said Lt. Dawn Thatcher, a dentist from Pearl Harbor.

“Out of more than 1,000 people, we didn’t see a single

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filling,” Thatcher said. “These people had never had any kind of dental care.”

Over both days, Thatcher and her fellow American and Filipino dentists and technicians treated 600 patients, pulling more than 900 teeth. They also identified children with cleft lip, referring them for surgical procedures with a

“Working alongside the AFP military doctors and nurses was an honor for us. We learned from each other and developed a bond.”

After demonstrating the ability to conduct a large-scale humanitarian assistance operation via amphibious landing, ESG-1 demonstrated the ability to conduct operations from the air into

Sanga Sanga. CH-46 Sea Knight and CH-53 Sea Stallion helicopters from HMM-163, the Air Combat Element (ACE) of the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable), transported the joint ESG-AFP humanitarian assistance team and all its supplies from the decks of Tarawa to Mindanao State University in Sanga Sanga.

The medical teams on the ground turned the school into a hospital, setting up dental areas, medical triage rooms, and a pharmacy. ESG-1 medical personnel worked shoulder-to-shoulder with AFP personnel, diagnosing and treating patients. The joint effort featured seamless integration;

ESG hospital corpsmen integrated with AFP doctors and civilian relief agencies, sometimes with the help of Filipino personnel from Tarawa fluent in the indigenous Tausug dialect.

Hospitalman Alicia Tilley worked alongside an AFP Nurse Corps colonel both days, treating hundreds of patients, mostly young children. “It was great to get off the ship and get a chance to use all of our training to help these people, especially the kids,” Tilley said.



A Sanga-Sanga child's heartbeat is monitored by Navy Lt. Jaime Baratta, general medical officer, USS Tarawa.

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“Working alongside the AFP military doctors and nurses was an honor for us. We learned from each other and developed a bond.”

The teamwork extended through all phases of the operation. MSSG-13 engineers teamed with AFP Navy Seabees to build new furniture for the a local elementary school, while AFP Marines providing security for the sites got a chance to integrate with their USMC counterparts. ESG-1 Sailors and Marines teamed with local government officials and non-government relief organizations to package and distribute hundreds of pounds of school supplies and textbooks to children. After two days of nonstop work in extreme heat conditions, the ESG-1 team returned back over the horizon, content with the knowledge they had made a difference for the people of the Phillipines.

“For everyone involved, this was an extremely positive experience,” said Lt. Col. Don Liles, commanding officer of MSSG-13. “They don’t have much at all, and for doctors and dentists to show up and show an interest in them, they were exceptionally pleased. We made an immediate impact on their lives,” Liles said.

Sailors Recognized



QM2(SW/AW) Catrina Allen is one of many sailors congratulated by Capt. Peter Murphy, Commanding Officer, for recently acquiring her Enlisted Aviation Warfare Specialist Qualification during an awards ceremony held Aug 13, prior to entering port in Darwin, Aus. A listing of all awardees can be viewed on next page. Photo by PHAN Shannon Garcia

Tarawa rewards its own...

ENLISTED AVIATION WARFARE

CTRC(SEL)(SW) Kenneth Jablecki
QM1(SW) Jack Wagner
BM1(SW) AJ Dean
QM2(SW) Catrina Allen
OS2(SW) Raymond Parizo
CS2(SW) Leaonardo Deguzman
IT2(SW) Antoine Hickman
IT2(SW) Barron Sledge
DK2(SW) Raymond Alston
AS2 Christopher Gonzalez
SK3(SW) Erwin Edralin
SK3(SW) Dexter Walker
PC3(SW) Patrick Downs
ABH3 ALEmmanueal CarazvelardeE
AO3 Christopher Chapman
AC3 Michael Nederlander
SK3(SW) Dexter Walker
YNSN(SW) Shanelle Stribling
PCSN(SW) Catherine Lawson
SN(SW) Christopher Young
ABHAN Anthony Vasquez
AN Adylson Andrade
AN Quinton Wilson
AN Veronica Araujo
ASAN Travis Roshae

ENLISTED SURFACE WARFARE

AM1(AW) Rommel Villaruz
AS1(AW) Daniel Daen
AO1(AW) Frank Marano
AC1(AW) Joseph Ranne
AD1(AW) Mohammad Khan
HMC(SEL) Neil Gamayon
ABH2(AW) Kevin Jasey
AC2(AW) Blaine Olmstead
HM2(FMF) Shannon Bia
HM2 Aneathria Major
IT2 Nina Willis
IT2 Toccara Dunklin
OS2 Shanice Feagins
SK2 Melissa Wilson
BM3 Brandon Balicki
AS3(AW) Dane Denobriga
HM3 Kyle McNamara
SK3 Holly Bremer
QM3 Curtis Lively
OS3 Crystal Gooding
SK3 Johnnita Rush
DK3 Sherina Watkins
IT3 Jonah Parsons
BM3 Ferly Walkup
BM3 Allan Vanslyke
CTTSN Michelle Carter
AN(AW) Ibrahim Suberu
HN Erin Owens
SN Kimberly Hyde

NAVY COMMENDATION MEDAL

LCDR Richard Bonnette
ABFC(AW/SW) Mark Camagong

NAVY ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

IC1 Bernard Lum
IT2(SW) Marjorie Ortega
HM2 Aneathria Major
IT2(SW) Antoine Hickman

FLAG LOC'S

DT1(SW/AW) Harold Gowin
AM1(AW) Rommel Villaruz
IT1(SW) Jennie Bellard
IT1(SW/AW) Angela Davis-Delgado
AO2(AW) Adam Gilmore
SK2(SW/AW) Lydia Thomas
IT2(SW) Anthony Cochran
IT3 Bryan Robertson
ET3(SW) Jonelle Betts
IT3 Damien Keeton
ET3 Ray Cody
JO3 David Perea

MOVSM

HMC(SEL) Neil Gamayon

Tarawa sailors enjoy liberty in Australia volunteering at Darwin schools



FCC Jorge Melonas enjoys his time off painting the Ludmilla School building walls.



CS2 Jaqueline Garcia and IT2 Kendrick Shaw assisted in tutoring children and teaching them "what it's like to be a Sailor" at the Ensington School in Darwin, Australia.

Photo by Tarawa Staff Photographer